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What Gandhi is Teaching the World

by

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

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What Gandhi is Teaching the World*

WHAT Gandhi is teaching the world is a matter of long standing, and it is hardly his fault if the world has not yet learned the lesson. It reminds me of what Jesus taught the world in ancient Palestine. That was nearly two thousand years ago, and the world seems to be as ignorant or obdurate as ever.

As compared with Jesus, Gandhi's period is a short one, yet it is already stretching to the span of an entire life. Thus, it was in 1894, no less than forty-eight years ago, that Gandhi began his teaching, by word and example, in South Africa. He continued his work there for twenty years, until 1914, and then returned to his native country. In India he has been teaching, by word and example, in prison and out, for more than a quarter of a century. And now, in the 73rd year of his age, he is teaching more effectively than ever. Once again, as so many times before, his rostrum is a prison, for on the eighth day of August last, he was placed under arrest by the English government in India, along with Mrs. Gandhi, and Jawaharlal Nehru, and Mme. Naidu, and President Azad, the Moslem President of the All India Congress, and thousands of others of the noblest leaders of Indian life, and since that time has been held behind the bars. I shall be reminded, to be sure, that Gandhi is not actually in a stone and iron jail — that he is being confined in what I have reason to believe is the palatial home of one of his wealthy friends, and is being treated, I have no doubt, with the utmost reverence and care. But this is a mere quibble! Under the law Mahatma Gandhi

*This sermon was preached at the Community Church on Sunday morning, October 25th, 1942.

is a prisoner; he is being held without charge or trial; and has no communication with the outer world. In the basic realities of the situation, Gandhi is just as much a prisoner in India as Martin Niemoeller is in Germany.

It is inevitable that we should ask how it happens that Gandhi should be arrested and confined. The answer to this question, from the English point of view, is perfectly plain. The Mahatma and his associates are demanding liberty for their people, and this is rebellion against the British crown. But how long since has it been a crime in the English world to demand liberty for a great people? The answer, from this same point of view, is again perfectly plain. Since England became engaged in a struggle for her life, and India herself was threatened with invasion by the armed forces of Japan! But the answer to this is obvious. Is not this war a war for liberty; and are not the Indians entitled to the same liberty which is enjoyed by the other nations — England, America, Russia, and China — for whom and with whom she is asked to fight; and can the Indians be expected to fight, with any enthusiasm or effectiveness, if they are forced to fight for a liberty which is not their own? Was not the Working Committee of the All India Congress correct when it declared, on July 18th last, that "the only way India can be defended effectively is through a National Government of the Indian people who will be willing to make every sacrifice for their own freedom"?

So great appeared the danger, as the shadow of Japan drew near — the danger that India would become another Burma or Malaya! — that Gandhi took the lead in demanding the independence of his country. This, after all, was a matter of India's own destiny, to say nothing of the destiny of all the

United Nations. As China was free to fight for freedom, so India must be free to fight for freedom. If Britain would not grant this freedom, then India must take it, and use it not only for herself but in the common cause of liberty the world around. It was in this spirit that, on the seventh day of August, the All India National Congress and its leaders, officially declaring themselves to be "for world freedom, and therefore anti-Axis," demanded that freedom be extended to themselves in the form of a definite grant of independence, and announced that, if this independence were refused, the Congress would "start non-violent non-cooperation against the British Government in India under the direction of Mahatma Gandhi." This non-cooperation movement, be it noted, was never launched, but only announced. Following the action of the Congress, Gandhi immediately declared a two weeks' moratorium, which he was quite ready to extend, for negotiations with the Viceroy to the end of arranging, by due process of give and take, the conditions under which independence should be granted. "I am a sensible man," said Gandhi — by which he meant that he was quite ready to recognize the extraordinary conditions under which freedom was being sought, and to make all reasonable concessions in the interest of the common safety of India and of Britain. There is nothing in the Mahatma of the intransigence of Mr. Churchill, who said, on September 10th, that the terms of the Cripps offer were absolutely final. These terms were repudiated by every party in India — Hindu, Moslem and Liberal alike — yet Mr. Churchill, like a fundamentalist Christian talking about the Bible, said that "no one can add to them and no one can take anything away." Gandhi was ready to negotiate, as he is ready to negotiate now. But within twenty-four hours of the action of the Congress,

before he could communicate with the Viceroy, while he was actually engaged in writing his letter to the Viceroy, he and his associates were arrested and are now held *incommunicado*. By power and by might, and not by spirit, was India thus bound captive to the Empire.

The imprisonment of Gandhi represents the climax of the greatest personal career of modern times. Slowly through the years the influence of Gandhi, like the boughs of a banyan tree, has been spreading far abroad. It struck root first in South Africa; then it extended to all of India; more lately it invaded China, as witness the pilgrimage to India a year ago of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, who came to consult and join hands with Gandhi and his colleagues. Today it reaches out to all the world, and has become the central force in a global war. For Gandhi's prison is not so much a prison as it is a judgment-seat on which he sits to judge the nations of the earth. What is Britain's purpose in this war? Is this war being fought for freedom, or for something else? Is it a war for humanity, or only for the white races among mankind? These are the questions which are being asked in Gandhi's prison, and which must be answered before his throne. Like God himself upon his judgment-seat, the Mahatma can bide his time. Day passes into day, and month into month, and Gandhi seemes to be suffering all in vain. But the clock of destiny is ticking, and the hands are moving upon its eternal face. Sooner or later, as Pearl Buck has repeatedly insisted, Gandhi's questions are going to be answered on Gandhi's terms, or else this war is going to be lost. The United Nations cannot win if any of its people are in bondage. Which means that the freedom of India, as any man not blind can see, is basic to the freedom of the world!

It is not difficult to discern how this current drama is going to work out. We have seen it all before in the case of Russia! For years Mr. Churchill poured out his abuse and hatred upon the Soviets. He ranked them second only to the Nazis as a menace to mankind. But a few weeks ago, after eating a fine dinner of his own words, Mr. Churchill made a pilgrimage to Moscow — he came to Stalin, and not Stalin to him! — and there in the Kremlin he sat humbly with the dictator, and received his instructions on this war. The same thing will happen in the case of India. Gandhi will be released, negotiations will be resumed, independence will in principle be granted. Then, in due course, shall we see Mr. Churchill, or perhaps Sir Stafford Cripps again, going to India, and sitting at the feet of the Mahatma whom Mr. Churchill has ridiculed as a "half-naked fakir," and receiving at his hands the terms of mutual aid against Japan. As the Congress Party prophesied as long ago as last July — "The representatives of free India and Great Britain will confer together for the adjustment of future relations, for the co-operation of the two countries as allies, and for the common cause in meeting aggression." Once again, as so many times before, Mohammed will come to the mountain, and not the mountain to Mohammed.

Yes, Gandhi can bide his time. And meanwhile, by his mere example, he is teaching the world some truths it ought to know. That's what always happens when a great man suffers for a cause! In a recent book on *Christian Europe Today,* by the great Swiss theologian, Dr. Adolf Keller, there appears a tribute to Pastor Niemoeller, of Germany. Dr. Keller reminds us that Niemoeller has been confined in Nazi concentration camps for a period of five years, and in spite of this fact, or rather because of it, has never been such an

influence as he is today. Five years ago he was hardly known outside of Berlin. Last winter, on an extensive lecture-trip in this country, Dr. Keller reports that "there was not a single town where (he) was not asked, 'How is Pastor Niemoeller?' " The victim of Nazi tyranny had become the center of the Christian world. And so with Gandhi, who has been known before, but never by so many millions as at this hour! And all of these millions are studying this little man, and learning from him some truths which they would otherwise have never known. What are some of these truths? What is Gandhi teaching the world today?

(1) Well, the first thing that comes to my mind is that Gandhi is teaching us the real meaning of this war, if it be honest — that it is a war to end the rule of empires, and bring in what Vice-President Wallace has nobly called "the century of the common man." We see this clearly enough in the case of Germany which is imposing an empire, or a New Order, as the Nazis call it, on the ruins of European civilization. We see it in the case of Japan which is extending its empire into China and Burma and the islands of the South Seas. We are not so likely to see it in the case of Britain which established her empire in India more than two hundred years ago, and has learned to soften the rigors of its dominion. But Gandhi, in demanding the emancipation of his country from British rule, has shown us that empires in essence are always and everywhere the same. That at bottom, and in the hour of crisis, one empire functions very much like another! For it is not any particular nation or culture which confronts us in this phenomenon, but a policy or system. An empire, in other words, is an *empire*. There can be no peace, either east or west, until empires are ended. For what, in its essentials, *is* an empire?

An empire is the rule of a subject people, regarded as racially and culturally inferior to their masters, to ends of political power and economic exploitation. The important point here is the subject people regarded as racially and culturally inferior. Germany conquers Europe under the drive of her mad conviction that her Nordic millions are a kind of super-race dowered by destiny to subdue the world. Japan extends her ruthless sway over humble and helpless peoples in the superstitious belief — and it is a real belief! — that her people are the children of the Sun, and therefore appointed to spread light throughout the world. The British have long had the idea in Asia that the white man is superior to the brown man, as we Americans here in our own country have the idea that the white man is the superior of the black man. Where peoples are of the same blood and the same cultural tradition, then empire tends to disappear, as the British Empire has disappeared into the British Commonwealth of Nations in the case of such dominions as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. But in India there is a people branded with the stamp of inferiority, although the Indians have a culture which far out-dates our Christian civilization, and presents achievements of wealth and beauty which rival anything our western world has ever known. It just happens that these Indians have no particular interest in the materialistic and mechanistic wonders of our society, and for centuries have been contemptuous of sheer military power. Now Gandhi has demanded liberty for these people. This liberty is nothing strange. The Mahatma is simply asking for his own people what we have long since gained and now carefully cherish for ourselves. He moves in the sublime tradition of Abraham Lincoln who said that no people were good and wise enough to rule any other people. But the moment Gandhi demands

this familiar boon of liberty, or rather this basic right of independence, just as our ancestors demanded it a hundred and seventy years ago, he runs right up against an empire which insists that an inferior people, profitable enough for exploitation, are incapable of governing themselves, or must at least prepare to govern themselves before liberty is granted. As though the Indians had not successfully practised the rites of self-government for centuries before Britain appeared upon the scene!

Here is a clash which leads directly to an impasse. And in such an impasse, all empires act the same. From the day of Nebuchadnezzar to the day of Hitler, the performance has never varied. First, the leaders of the people seeking liberty are promptly seized and effectually removed, that the people may find themselves like lost sheep without a shepherd. I have heard it stated that today, in India, there are not less than 50,000 of the best men and women behind the bars. Secondly, the people are denied all rights of free expression and agitation—all means of communication and common action. In India at this moment, newspapers are suppressed, public meetings forbidden, and all civil liberties denied. Thirdly, the people, if in any slightest degree rebellious, are ruthlessly subdued by force and violence. In India, the people have been whipped, they have been shot down in the public streets, they have even been machine-gunned from the skies. In a period of two months, not less than eight hundred men and women have been killed by the authorities. This is empire at work when its power is questioned and its rule denied.

Now it is this which Gandhi has revealed—what empires are, and how their range today extends beyond the bounds of

our enemies. But he has revealed more than this—that empires must end, if this war, like the last war, is not to be lost after it has been won! For what avails it to restore liberty to 200,000,000 Europeans, and refuse it to 380,000,000 Indians, who are more than a sixth part of the population of the globe? Pearl Buck is right when she declares that such a situation can mean only another and later war between the races east and west. And with what face can we insist upon the evacuation of the occupied countries of Europe, and not at the same time insist upon a similar evacuation of the occupied countries of Asia? Nothing can so surely substantiate the charge, which should be impossible, that this is a war not for freedom but for empire. Just by insisting upon the emancipation of his people has Gandhi clarified the real meaning of the war, and saved it perhaps from some kind of irreparable disaster. What else can Wendell Willkie have had in mind when he said in his Chungking statement, on October 7th, that the people of the East must be told that the United Nations "believe this war must mean an end to the empire of nations over other nations. . . . And we must say so now," said Mr. Willkie, "and not after the war. It is the world's job to find some system for helping colonial peoples who join the United Nations' cause to become free and independent nations." This was a true American speaking; and when he said this, comments a distinguished editorial writer, he "was looking straight at India." Thus has Gandhi taught us what we are doing, or should be doing. He leads the world, as George Washington led his world, in the quest of liberty. And as there stands in London today a statue of Washington, so will there stand in London, at some future day, a statue of Gandhi.

(2) Another thing that Gandhi is teaching the world is the helplessness of empire in the face of the unconquerable

power of the spirit. We have lost this truth, if we ever had it at all, in the fearful experiences of the last few years. Looking upon the greatest military power the world has ever known, one vast machine of destruction and of death, we have shuddered at what has seemed to be its utter invincibility. We have wondered if the free peoples of the world could ever succeed in mustering such concentrated might as is represented by the Axis. And if our arms should fail, what then would be our lot? But we have forgotten that there is a limit to the conqueror's power, and that there are weapons in this world that he can never destroy.

Jesus taught this truth many centuries ago when he stood before the judgment-bar of Pilate, and declared that "to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." On the one side, in the person of Pilate, stood the power of imperial Rome — the greatest military force that existed in the world of that time. On the other side stood a solitary and pitiful figure—a man without arms and without friends, who had no power save what he might muster in his inner soul. Pilate was baffled by this man. What should he do with him? How could he get rid of him? Reluctantly, in response to the clamor of the mob, he decided to kill him. He would nail him to a cross, and that would be the end of him! Nothing could be easier, with the stout legionaries of Rome on every side. So it was done! But it was not the end of anything. Jesus was not crushed by Pilate's act, but only liberated. His spirit rose straightway from the dead, and went striding far and wide across the world. For three hundred years after the crucifixion of Jesus, there was fought a duel between the Roman Empire on the one hand, and on the other hand little groups of Christians who had no weapons to defend them but what

St. Paul called "the sword of the spirit" and "the shield of faith." And it was the Christians and not the Empire that won. For the first time in her history, Rome had found a foe that could not be beaten.

The same thing is happening in Germany today—the helplessness of an empire in the face of an unconquerable spirit. I have already referred this morning to Martin Niemoeller, and his influence which has spread throughout the world. Have you never asked yourself why Hitler does not get rid of this man, who has defied him to his face? And then have you never asked yourself what he can do to get rid of him? He has shut him up in prison, and denied him visitors. He has stopped all correspondence, and allowed no books or papers. Niemoeller's voice is silenced, his presence blotted from the book of life. "But his spirit remains unbroken," says Dr. Keller, already quoted. "Niemoeller has become a symbol for thousands of Christians who cannot bow their knees before any Baal and prefer suffering to the betrayal of Christ. . . . His prison has become the bulwark of the Christian conscience." Why does not Hitler kill him? Is it possible that the Fuehrer, who has butchered millions, is stayed by some inner warning that this heroic Pastor would be more potent dead than he is alive?

And now Gandhi, on an infinitely vaster scale, is teaching this same truth of the power of the spirit. For twenty years and more, Britain has been trying to find an answer to the question as to what to do with Mahatma Gandhi. Britain seems to have no doubt as to what to do with another man, named Adolf Hitler. It can fight him, and beat him, and exile him, and kill him. Britain has met such men before, as witness Napoleon and Kaiser Wilhelm and the Mad Mullah, and

has worked out a precise formula of procedure. These men can be disposed of by the same methods of force and violence that they themselves employ. But Gandhi is a different type. He moves on another plane. To punish him is to increase his power. To imprison him is to extend and spread his influence. To kill him would make him a god for millions of ecstatic worshippers. Nothing has been more amusing, and at the same time more significant, than the terror of the British government, on occasion of illness or a hunger-strike, lest Gandhi perish on their hands. They have known no more of what to do with Gandhi than Pilate knew of what to do with Jesus. And so, for all these years, the Empire has endured him, and pampered him, and conferred with him, and every once in so often arrested and imprisoned him. Only to see him grow steadily in dignity and power, until now he is one of the five most important men in all the world. The helplessness of empire when confronted by a soul!

In Plato's dialogue of *Phaedo,* there is an account of the last hours of Socrates. Just before the great man drank the hemlock, his disciple, Crito, asked about the disposal of his body. "In what way shall we bury you," asked Crito. And Socrates replied, "However you wish, only you must catch me first and see that I don't slip away." This is the trouble that all these empires have with these Christs, and Pastors, and Mahatmas. They have armies and navies, and swords and bombs, and prisons and scaffolds. They can arrest, and imprison, and slay, and bury. Only they cannot seem to catch these men who live in the pure essence of the spirit. These men are always slipping away. Put them in prison—and they walk abroad. Nail them on crosses—and they rise from the dead. Bury them alive, as Gandhi is to all intents and pur-

poses buried alive today—and multitudes swing in their orbit, as the stars swing 'round the sun. An empire can handle a conqueror but not a saint; it can destroy a dictator but not a martyr. As well expect to catch the wind as to chain a soul. It is the spirit that is supreme.

(3) This brings me, naturally enough, to a third thing which Gandhi is teaching the world today. I refer to the power of non-resistance — or, as Gandhi better puts it, the power of non-violent resistance. This is fool's counsel, say the wise men of this world. Imagine accomplishing anything —defending any interest, or serving any cause—by the use of non-violence in a world committed to coercion! It is true that there are individual non-resistants who give us pause—Jesus, and St. Francis, and Leo Tolstoi, and the great body of the Quakers, who seem to live in safety, and to secure their ends by the soft methods of persuasion. There is some secret here of the spirit which we ought to know! But our problem today is one not of individuals but of society. It is with masses of men that we are concerned—with the fate of nations and the destiny of the race. How can we talk with any patience of non-resistance, or non-violent resistance, when barbarians are abroad—men like animals who rend and tear, devour and ravage, and threaten with hideous violence the whole structure of civilization? This is no time for sentiment and theory. It is a time rather of grim and terrible reality. As well think of stopping a gale by the fluttering of a bird's wings, as to stop the aggression of an enemy by kind words and loving deeds.

So it would seem—until you look at Gandhi, and see that his great achievement, by which he will be uniquely remembered in time to come, is the extension of this non-violent

principle from the field of individual to that of social action. Not the single saint merely but a whole society may use this principle to effect its ends. It is interesting to see how Gandhi worked it out!

He was faced by the problem, at the close of the last war, of rescuing Indian nationalism from British rule. The regular thing to do was of course to start a revolution, and deliver his country by waging a war for freedom. But there were two things that forbade. First of all, Gandhi believed, as a matter of profound religious conviction, that the use of force, even for such an end, was wrong. He had learned this from the Hindu scriptures, from the Christian gospels, from the writings of our own Thoreau, from the teachings of Tolstoi, and from the inward meditations of his own heart. It was the Truth, as he puts it, in identifying Truth with God, that violence is the violation of the divine will. But there was a second consideration—and this a practical one. Gandhi couldn't use force to free India from bondage, even if he had been willing to, since the Indians had no arms. The Empire has always seen to it that the masses of the Indian people should have no weapons at their disposal. There was a time when a people could fight for liberty by tearing up the paving-stones from the streets and building barricades. But that time has forever passed with the coming of repeating rifles, machine-guns, and bombing-planes. It was in this extremity, determined partly by conviction and partly by sheer necessity, that Gandhi conceived his program of non-violence. We will organize, he said, a movement of cooperation to the end of non-cooperation with the enemy. We will oppose non-violently all evil, more particularly the evil of the British Raj. We will do good wherever possible, even to loving our enemies as men and women. And we will discipline ourselves to suffering, so

that we may endure all injury and humiliation without striking back, and be ready always to die but not to kill. The price of freeing India we will pay, in the blood not of others but of ourselves.

This is the movement which Gandhi launched, and has conducted with a success which has paralyzed the world. When Hitler is remembered only as one of the cruelest conquerors of history, and Churchill only as one of the great war ministers of England, Gandhi will be remembered as the statesman who forged the infinitely beneficent weapon of non-violence. It was in 1921 that Gandhi led his first campaign for liberty. Without striking a blow or taking a life, he shook the Empire to its foundations. "He came within a hair's breadth of succeeding," said Lord Lloyd, the British governor of Bombay. Steadily since that early day, through a period of twenty years, the Mahatma has been pushing his cause. Now he has gained a little here, and now a little there. He has won first one concession, and then another. He has moved from a suggestion of dominion status to an unqualified demand for independence. Sometimes the movement has been active and open; more often it has been quiescent. But always it has moved forward, and today stands upon the very edge of triumph. For the Indians now are not alone. They have won the support of China. They are capturing the sympathy of America. Great numbers of Englishmen are rallying to their cause. The freedom of India is at one with the victory of the United Nations. In a period of less than a generation, the Indians have overcome an empire, and have done so without fighting a battle or dropping a bomb.

This is what Gandhi is teaching us of non-violence. Am I wrong if I assert that this is the greatest single achievement

of modern times, and the greatest single boon ever conferred upon mankind? What is the curse of our world, or at least of our western world, if not its insistent resort to force and violence for the accomplishment of its ends? Have we forgotten that China flourished for centuries without the use of arms? Have we never heard of the Indian emperor, Asoka, who tired of conquest, and suddenly disbanded his armies, and lived at peace with his neighbors? Would the way of violence ever have come again into the east, if it had not been brought there by the imperialistic nations of the west? And now our violence has turned upon itself. We are being destroyed by our own weapons. English armies have been crushed by tanks which were invented in England. American boys have been killed by bombs which were fabricated out of American scrap iron. The voice of Jesus rises above the tumult — "He that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword." What are we going to do? How may we escape? Is there any answer but that of Gandhi? Is he not teaching us the truth, and showing us the way?

(4) Which brings me promptly to the last thing which Gandhi is teaching the world — namely, the secret of enduring peace!

Some weeks ago there was an editorial in the New York TIMES which is too long to quote, but which I may paraphrase. It was in reference to Gandhi and the Indian crisis, and made three definite points. First, Gandhi is a man of unimpeachable integrity. His actions may be questionable in policy, but are pure in motive. Secondly, Gandhi's ideals are the loftiest ideals of the soul. If we all lived as Gandhi lives and would have us live, there would be no wars, or rumors of wars. And thirdly, these ideals are quite impracticable at

the present moment. His demand for the immediate independence of India is intolerable. We have a war on to the death, and we can take no risks in the winning of this war. Always the postponement of our ideals! Today is never the time to live as we ought to live, to do what we ought to do, but only tomorrow!

But let us grant this point of view for the sake of argument. I see what the New York TIMES means when it says that nothing must be allowed to interfere with this war. I will not dispute at this moment that the war must be fought through to the bitter end, until we have overcome our enemies. But you then in turn must not dispute with me that to win the war is not necessarily to win the peace. Nay, you must go farther and agree with me that the very conditions that make for a successful war are at the same time the conditions that militate against a successful peace. What happend in the last war is the dreadful menace of what may happen again in this war. A new influence must come into the world, if we are not to lose everything after we have won everything. I am not sure of that influence in Washington — not after the frustration of so great a man as Woodrow Wilson at Versailles. I cannot see it in London—Mr. Churchill is the greatest of warriors but the poorest of peace-makers. I cannot find it in Russia, nor yet in China — in both countries the virus of war has bitten in too deep! As a matter of fact, it is war that is defeating its own ends. It is the old vicious circle of war producing a bad peace, and a bad peace producing another war. How can that circle be broken? What can we do if not go to a man otuside the war, who moves upon a plane above the battle? Put Gandhi at the peace-table — make him the arbiter of the world's destiny! And will we not secure at last the peace for which we pray?

Gandhi is in nothing, it seems to me, so great as in his teaching of the precepts of peace. That all men shall be free! That there shall be one human world united in the law of liberty! That in this world there shall be no discrimination of race, nationality, or creed! That all men shall share in the bounties of this abundant earth. That there shall be no slavery of labor, and no servitude of class! That love shall be the rule of life, and forgiveness the compassion of the heart. That hatred and bitterness shall be no more! That violence shall be done away, that men may "not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." Where have we heard these words before? In Isaiah, the prophet of Israel; in the Lord Buddha; in Jesus the Christ! But here is one among us who speaks these words again, and commends them as the only way to peace. Why should we not listen to such teaching? Is it not the indictment not of Gandhi but of ourselves, if we hear and do not obey? Again I see the Mahatma upon his judgment seat. We stand before him, we peoples of the earth. He judges us, and not we him. For what we are, and what we would do, is revealed, as in the light of heaven, by our reaction upon his spirit. Shall the world find peace? It all depends on what we do—with Gandhi!

Such is my answer to the question as to what Gandhi is teaching the world today. He is teaching the meaning of empire, in relation to this present war. He is teaching the helplessness of empire, and of all the powers of this world, in the face of the soul as a witness unto God. He is teaching the validity of non-violence as a way of life. And he is teaching the secret, that open and yet strangely hidden secret, of enduring peace. There are other truths which Gandhi is teaching, for the Mahatma is a universal man. He touches

the circumference of the spirit at all points of the horizon. But we have seen enough, if we have eyes to see at all, to recognize Gandhi for what he is. A "fakir," say some. A Machiavellian schemer, say others. A Quisling, or a Von Papen, say not a few in the crisis of this war. He is a combination, says John Gunther, in his book entitled *Inside Asia*, "of a saint and a Tammany Hall politician." There are all kinds of guesses by those who cannot believe that "God is not dead that he should speak no more," or that in this present age, as in earlier ages, "God hath not left himself without witness." The fact is that Gandhi is so simple — the crystal-clear disclosure in our time of "the Word made flesh" and dwelling among men!

I scan the course of history, and see the procession of Great Souls who reveal the truth of God. There are not many of them. They come along at intervals of five hundred or a thousand years. They are not recognized while they are here. They are more often ridiculed, derided, and condemned. The centuries must pass, to bring in the long perspective of the years, before their stature is seen and their wisdom known. But then they loom like the peaks of mountains against the sky. Confucius, Lao-tse, Zoroaster, Buddha, Isaiah, Jesus, Mohammed, St. Francis of Assisi — there they are! And now, in this our time, is Gandhi. That he is among us seems to make him common. That he is interviewed by newspaper reporters seems to reduce him to the low level of the day's affairs. That he is involved in the politics of empire seems to classify him with the company of contemporary diplomats and statesmen. But Jesus once walked the roads of Palestine, and was not common. Jesus was interviewed by priests and lawyers, and rose loftily above them. Jesus became entangled

in the politics of Rome, and was crucified as a malefactor between two thieves; and even the centurion at the foot of the cross who saw him die, could cry, "Verily, this man is the Son of God." Perhaps when we see Gandhi die, we shall cry the same. But meanwhile the Mahatma is what he is, and will be discovered by posterity for what he is. The latest in the succession of the Great Souls who know God and speak his word forever! What wonder that he is teaching us the truth. What wonder if we do not listen, and be saved?

Slowly but surely, even while he yet lives among us, the Mahatma is finding his way into the poetry as well as the prophecy of the race. Among several great tributes to Gandhi which I find beautiful, I choose to close my sermon with this noble piece by a distinguished American poet, and member of this church, Miss Angela Morgan:

"How many prophets would ye have, O people?
How many saviors of a martyr-killing race?
How many prophets would ye stone and imprison,
O cruel and blind generation! . . .

"Many there be who do pray for a star.
Many in this darkest night of the world
Grovel at the feet of the Most High God,
Begging for a Savior or a Sign. —
Yet here is Gandhi!

"Take him to your hearts, O people,
For lo, a messenger whose word shall make you whole.
Take him for your nourishing, O nations,
For here is the bread that shall cure your famines.
Take him into your courts, O lawgivers,
For here is the Law that fulfilleth all law.

"Take him into your council chambers,
O diplomats and statesmen,
Who with cold words engraven upon parchment
Have fashioned future hells for the weak and the dependent!
Receive him into your congresses and parliaments,
Ye who are spokesmen for those who may not speak,
Link him into your governments, O rulers in high places,
Premiers, presidents, mayors, kings!
Take him into your churches,
O hymn-singing, enraptured congregations,
Bending the knee to a Janus-God breathing Love and War.
Take him into your pulpits, ministers of the gospel
Who make many prayers and are forever mouthing
The sacred word of God,
Yet know not that word when it doth come! . . .

"How many prophets would ye have, O people?
How many Christs from Pilate for the rabble?
Still do ye pead for a Sign and a Token?
Do ye kneel still?
Yet here is Gandhi!"